



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers®**

St. Paul District

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**Public Affairs**

# Corps Facts

## Zebra mussel control feasibility study

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### **Zebra mussel control feasibility study**

The Chicago, Rock Island and St. Paul districts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, as well as the Corps' Engineering Research and Development Center, completed a reconnaissance study in September 2003 to look at controlling the infestation of zebra mussels now and for the long-term. The reconnaissance study recommended an in-depth feasibility study and, if funded, will be initiated in FY 2006. It would take three years and \$2 million to complete.

The feasibility study would look at measures to control and manage dispersal of zebra mussels in the Upper Mississippi River system, ways to reduce and manage zebra mussel populations already in the river system and control measures to prevent introductions of zebra mussels and other exotic species into the river. The study would look at such things as large- and small-scale alterations of the hydrodynamics of the Upper Mississippi River System to manage zebra mussels and closures of the river system, cleaning and coating technologies and barriers to prevent transport of zebra mussels. The study could recommend alternatives that fall outside of the Corps of Engineers' existing authorities. Such alternatives would need to be implemented by other concerned agencies or the public.



**Zebra mussels cover native Higgins' eye.**

### **Project background and cooperating agencies**

This project stems from an April 2000 U.S. Fish and Wildlife report that stated continued operation of the nine-foot channel on the Upper Mississippi River system would likely jeopardize the continued existence of the Higgins' eye. To explain, the Asian native zebra mussels were transported up the Upper Mississippi River by commercial barges and recreational craft. These zebra mussels cover the native mussels completely, so the native mussels can't open up and they die. The Corps of Engineers additionally began, in a separate yet interrelated effort, a relocation plan for the endangered Higgins' eye pearly mussel.

The Corps of Engineers is the lead agency in this zebra mussel control effort, as well as a partner in the government-sponsored Mussel Coordination Team that looks at all mussel-related activities. The members include the National Park Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey and the departments of natural resources from Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin, as well as the Science Museum of Minnesota.

### **Project authority**

Section 216 of the River and Harbor and Flood Control Act of 1970 authorizes the Chief of Engineers to review the operation of completed projects when found advisable due to significantly changed physical or economic conditions and to report thereon to Congress with recommendations on the advisability of modifying the structures or their operation for improving the quality of the environment in the overall public interest.